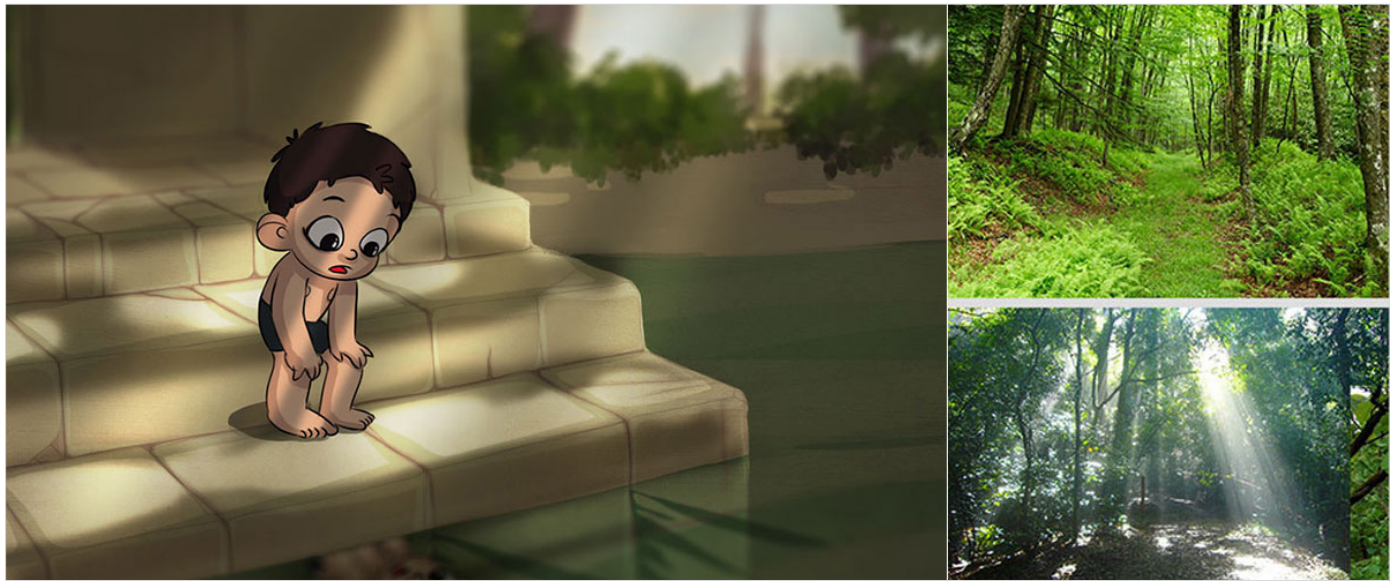
Design Course

Layout Design for Animation - Part - I

Animation Technique

by
Gayathri Jeaks and Prof. Phani Tetali
IDC, IIT Bombay



Source:
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1. Introduction
2. Story and Script
3. Research
4. Thumbnailing
5. Conclusion
6. Video
7. Design Tools
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Introduction

Layout design for animation is the process of conceptualizing environments based on the story of the animated film, and adapting it to the stylistic choices of the film. The primary role of the layout artist is to design the stage on which the animation of the character or special effects takes place.

The layout design comes in as early as the storyboard drawings are done. Layout artists then develop them into detailed backdrops, which are further used by the animators and the background painters to work upon.

A finished layout with a character in place.

This short introductory module on the layout design for animation will introduce you to the concepts of:

1. Story
2. Research
3. Thumbnailing

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Story and Script

Story is one of the most important parts of the film.

STORY

Once upon a time, there were two friends, Polu the monkey and Mindy the parrot. Both of them were unhappily living in a circus, being tortured by the circus master. They were always shut up in a cage and only let out during their performance. Polu yearned to be outside but there was no way to escape.

One day, the circus master dozed off with the keys to the cage of hanging out of him. Polu tried his luck in reaching the keys. Luckily, the master forgot to lock Mindy's cage. She flew in and took the key from the master and unlocked Polu. Both of them ran for their lives.

They didn't know where they were going or what to do next, but they kept on running. Eventually, they reached a dark scary forest. Both of them were afraid to venture in, but they didn't want to go back either. So they ran into the forest without looking back. They kept running until they reached the edge of a cliff.

To be continued...

Sample Story.

The events which occur in the film are the interactions between the characters and its environment as dictated by the story. Before the story can be made into a film, a script or a screenplay has to be written. It is here where the story is broken down into its major action and plot points.

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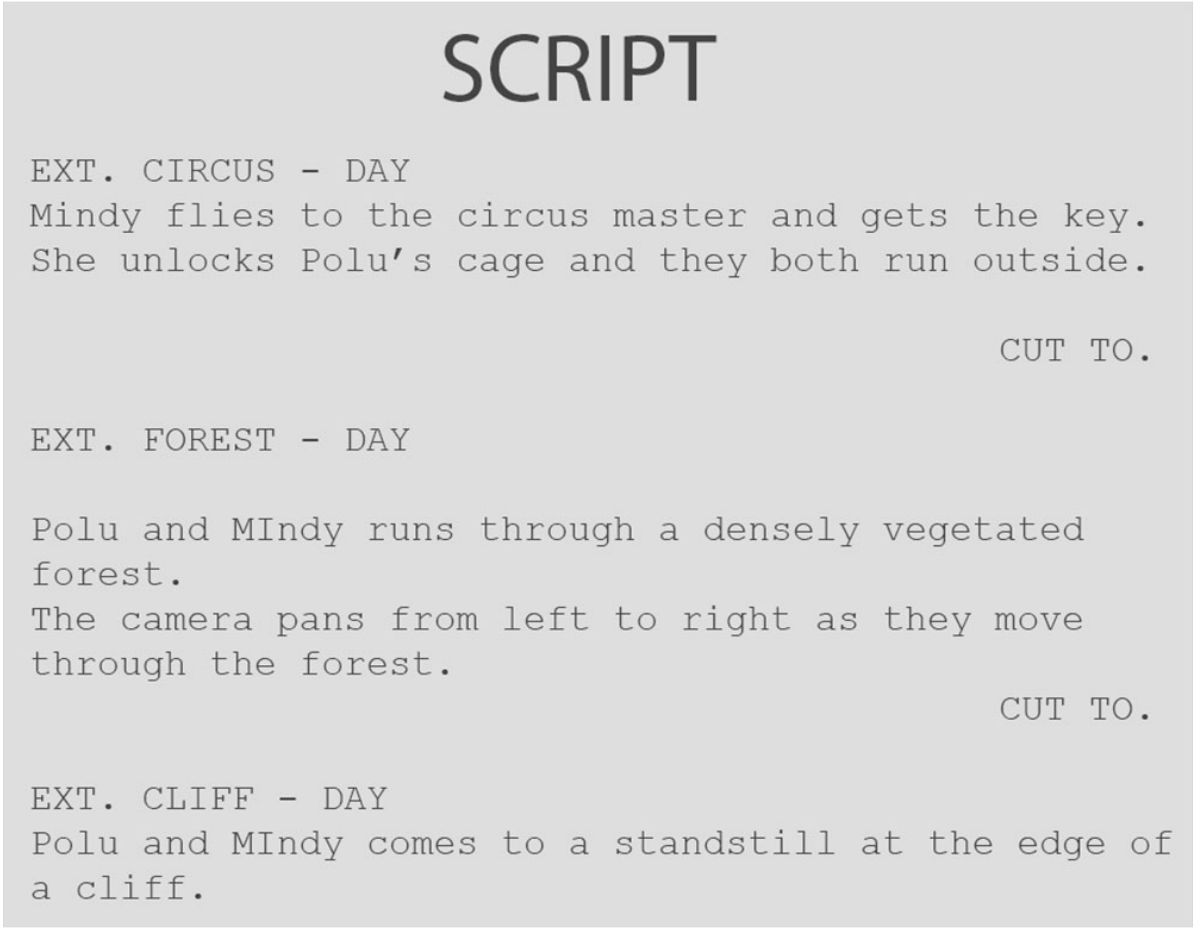

SCRIPT

EXT. CIRCUS - DAY
Mindy flies to the circus master and gets the key.
She unlocks Polu's cage and they both run outside.

CUT TO.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Polu and MIndy runs through a densely vegetated forest.
The camera pans from left to right as they move through the forest.

CUT TO.

EXT. CLIFF - DAY
Polu and MIndy comes to a standstill at the edge of a cliff.

A Sample Script.

From here the storyboard artist turns the script into storyboard drawings. From the storyboard drawings the layout artist will develop the background design required for the film.

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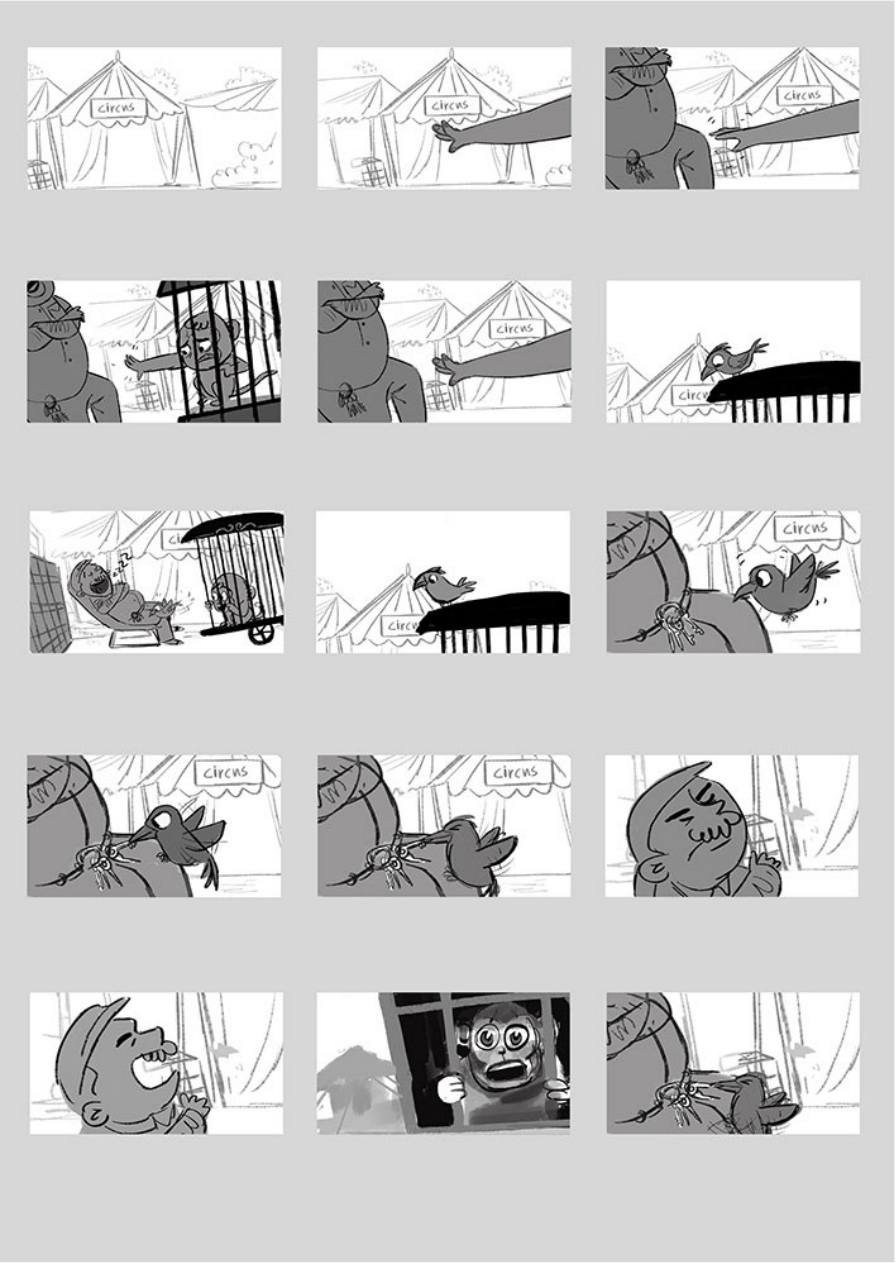

A Sample Storyboard.

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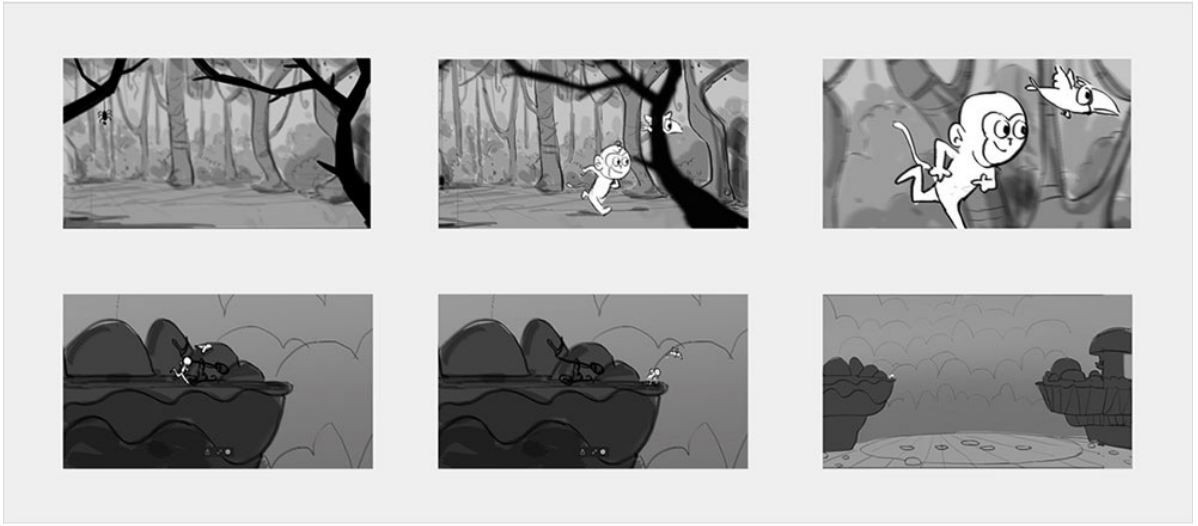

A Sample Storyboard.

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Source:
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Research

Research plays an important role in helping create a background come to life. After receiving the storyboard drawings, we need to research on the location to bring more authenticity to the final layout drawing. Research will help us understand the flora and fauna of the environment and helps in making the layout more believable.

Suppose a story involves a forest, but the specifics of the forest are not well defined apart from the locality. When this happens, there is a need to research location and build up a visual library of images so that that we have various examples for consideration when we draw the actual layout.

A quick google search on Indian forests will give us enough reference to get started on the design.

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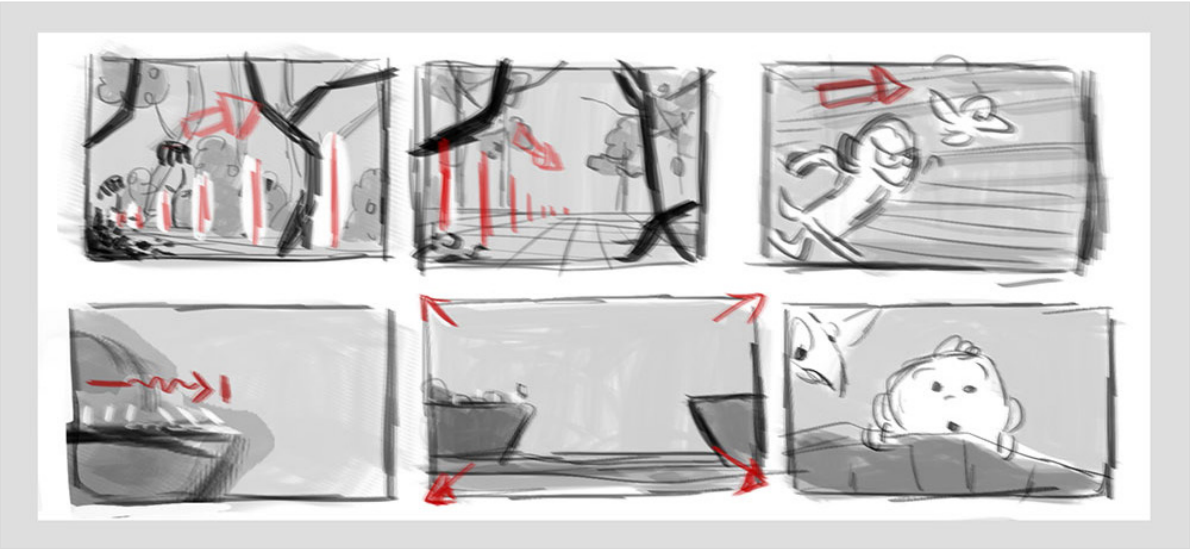
Thumbnailing

Thumbnails are quick and rough drawings. They rarely have any real amount of detail. The purpose of the thumbnails are to visualize concepts and layouts quickly and make it more visually effective and dynamic.



Rough thumbnail sketches for the story mentioned above.

The important thing to keep in mind while thumbnailing is on the emphasis of strong shapes supporting composition without going into the details.

Once they are approved they are further developed into conceptual pieces.

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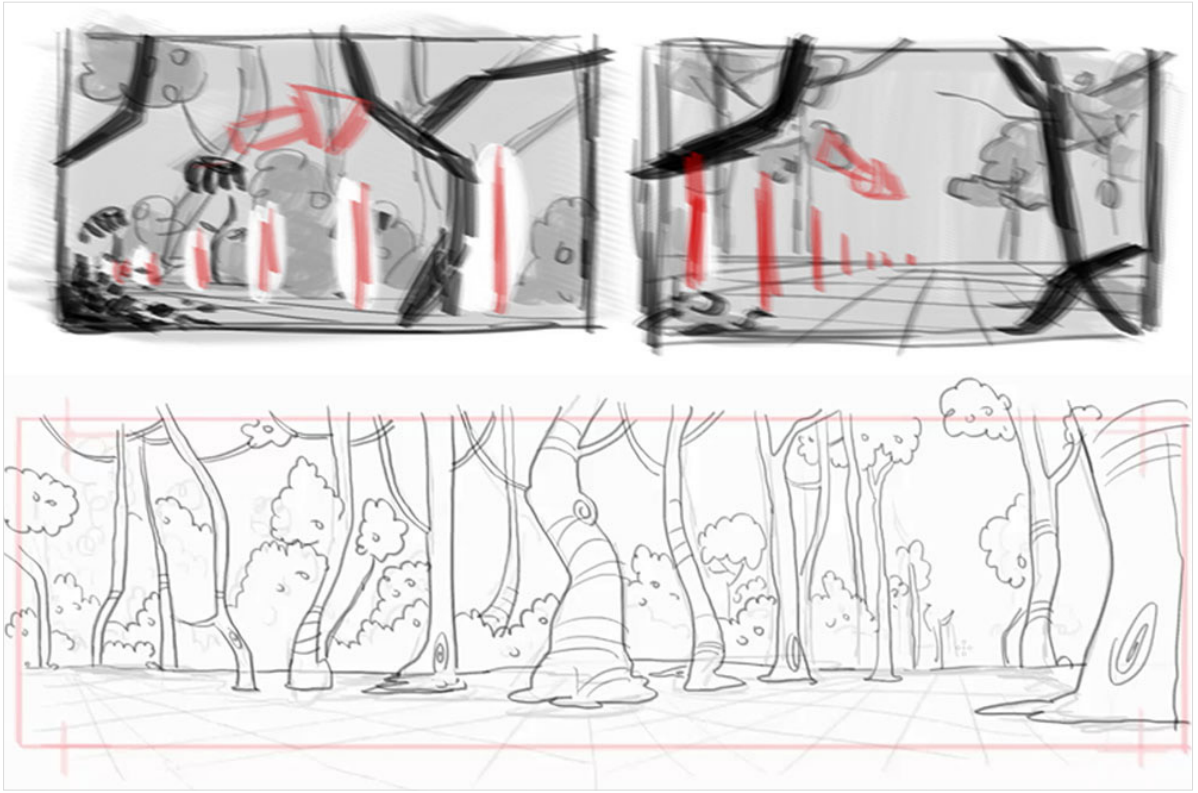

The thumbnails are further developed into final inked layouts.

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Conclusion

This concludes Part - I of layout design for animation. Part - II of the course will introduce the concept of staging, which is one of the primary concepts to keep in mind while designing layouts for animation.

The following video show the process of going from a rough thumbnail sketch to an inked background.

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Source:
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Video

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Source:
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Design Tools

Animation Design:

Animation is a method of photographing successive drawings, models or even puppets to create an illusion of movement in a sequence. Animation Tool is developed by IDC, IIT Bombay. It is an interactive web space where students can learn about the basics of animation. There are four main types of animation that are commonly used: 2D Traditional Animation, 2D Computer Animation, Stop Motion Animation, and 3D Computer Animation. There's also something called Experimental animation, where you can mix different types of animation together. The Animation Tool teaches things like Straight Ahead, Pose to Pose, Stretch and Squash, and Slow in Slow out, which are all important for making animations look good.

For more information visit: https://dsource.in/tool/animation_tool/

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Contact Details

This documentation was done by Gayathri Jeaks at IDC, IIT Bombay.

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